29.738/C/1

F. IX

18/h

SOCIETY FOR BETTERING THE CONDITION OF THE POOR.

The Select Committee for preventing Contagious Fevers, take the earliest opportunity of laying before the Society the information with which they have been favoured, in answer to their Queries upon the subject of Infectious Fevers. They have the pleasure of observing, that the prevalence of these Fevers in the metropolis is less, at the present time, than it has been for many years back: and that some parts of the town, where this infection had been generally and fatally prevalent, (such as Field Lane, Saffron Hill, and Spread Eagle Court, in Gray's Inn Lane,) are now exempt from it; as appears by a communication, with which they have been favoured by the Rev. Mr. Barton, Rector of St. Andrew's, Holborn, within whose parish those districts lie.

They have also the satisfaction of reporting (on the information of the Rev. Mr. M'Carthy, Curate of Spitalfields) that Infectious Fever does not at present prevail in that parish;—nor (as appears by other Reports) in Westminster, nor in the neighbourhood of the Royal Exchange, except in a few narrow courts in Cripplegate, and near Coleman Street. Nor has it at any time been prevalent, to any fatal or general extent, in the airy and opulent neighbourhood of Grosvenor Square, nor in any of the western parts of the metropolis.

It appears, however, that the infection has been constantly retained in some parts of London and Westminster; where want of cleanliness and of a supply of fresh air, and neglect of medical precaution, have, from time to time, renewed the miseries of Infectious Fevers among the Poor; and that no *parochial* measures have been yet taken in the metropolis, for cleansing the habitations of the Poor, so as entirely to remove the infection. Upon this subject Dr. Richard Pearson, of Bloomsbury Square, has supplied the Committee with much useful information, both as to the local seats of the infection, and the causes and remedy thereof.

The result of his observation, as to this infection spreading thro families in the metropolis, from sources unknown and unsuspected, is confirmed by a letter, which the Committee has been favoured with by Dr. Fraser, of Lower Grosvenor Street; who observes, that in the few cases of Infectious Fever, that have come under his care, the source of infection could not by any means be traced.

The opinion of all these Gentlemen concurs in this point;—that with regular attention, there would be very few instances of Infectious Fever in London; and this is confirmed by a remarkable fact, stated by Mr. Leese, of Copthall Court, that of eight patients in *Typhus* Fever, which he attended last summer, he had reason to believe, that all the infection originated from one individual case in Bell Alley.

The present exemption of the metropolis from Infectious Fever cannot, it must be admitted, be wholly imputed to the Fever Institution, and to the House of Recovery which it has established in Gray's Inn Lane. The effect, however, of this favourable exemption, must, in some part, be ascribed to that Institution; particularly in those places within its District, which have been hitherto constantly and fatally subject to the infection of *Typhus*, and which are now reported to be exempt from it. This has been occasioned by the removal of the Fever Patients into the House of Recovery, and by the cleansing of their infected clothes and habitations, so as entirely to destroy the Contagion. The benefits which the Public has derived from the Fever Institution, have also been greatly extended by the remedy, which that Institution has contributed to make known, and introduce into practice,—the application of cold and tepid affusion, in Typhus and Scarlet Fevers; a remedy which has not only miraculously abridged the Patients period of suffering under the violence of the Disease,—so as frequently to determine in two or three days, a Disorder which, in the ordinary course, might have lasted for twenty or thirty days;—but has operated by shortening the period of this Contagious Disease, to diminish and restrain the duration and virulence, and to prevent the spreading of the Infection.

The Fever Institution has also been of great service to the Public, by the general attention which it has drawn to this important subject; a subject, in which the health and well-being, not only of the Poor, but of every other Class, are intimately connected. The effects of that attention, and of the exertions of the Fever Institution, will appear by two circumstances, which, the Select Committee think proper to state, before they conclude this Report. The first has a reference to the

Public Dispensary in Carey Street, the Patients of which are within the relief of the Fever Institution. It appears from the Report of Dr. Bateman, the Physician of that Dispensary, that the number of their Fever Patients has been so reduced, since the establishment of the House of Recovery in Gray's Inn Lane, that instead of their usual average of 200 or 300 Fever Patients in the year,—only four such Patients have applied in the preceding year, 1804. The other circumstance is, that by the Bills of Mortality for 1804 it appears, that the Deaths of that year, from fevers of all kinds, have amounted to only 1702, being nearly one third less than the average of four preceding years, and not above half of what used to be formerly computed as the average mortality from Fevers, in the metropolis.

By Order of the Committee,

SOMERSET, Chairman.

February 15, 1805.

The Members of the Society may be furnished with Copies of this Report GRATIS, *by applying to Mr. Hatchard, No.* 190, *Piccadilly.*

REPORT

FOR THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

For preventing Contagious Fevers in the Metropolis.

15th Feb. 1805.

3479 8

24 II